

**Question for written answer E-005592/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

John Flack (ECR), Linnéa Engström (Verts/ALE), Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE), Richard Corbett (S&D), Stefan Eck (GUE/NGL) and Klaus Buchner (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Reference centre for the welfare of farmed fish

The EU strategy on animal welfare aims to 'investigate the welfare of farmed fish'. It also proposes the establishment of a European network of reference centres to ensure 'that the competent authorities receive coherent and uniform technical information on the way the EU legislation should be implemented', as stipulated by Articles 95 and 96 of the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625.

The recent Commission report on common practices during transport and at slaughter of fish indicates that the slaughter of fish was most commonly either non-compliant with EU slaughter legislation or that compliance was uncertain owing to the lack of institutional checking, with documentation, of slaughter equipment.

While the Commission is relying on Member States to implement the legislation, coordination is required to implement best practice during the slaughter of fish. The same principle applies to the welfare of fish during rearing, breeding and transport.

Will the Commission urgently consider drafting plans to set up a reference centre to focus on the welfare of farmed fish? In order to: support the Commission and Member States with technical expertise; develop guidelines; conduct training courses for the benefit of staff from competent authorities, the aquaculture industry and experts from third countries; contribute to the dissemination of research findings, technical innovations and best practice; coordinate research; and validate the efficacy of stunning equipment.